

JACOB BLOUNT'S FAMILY

The problem of securing settlers for the new land was one of England's greatest concerns for America in the seventeenth century. The government made liberal provisions for this purpose, even to waiving religious qualifications in times when religious variances were easily identifiable with political offenses. Still, more colonists were needed. There were many would-be settlers in Europe who were unable to bear the costs of transportation. For such persons colonizing agencies offered assistance by promising grants of land to anyone who was able to convey the less fortunate to the New World. Since land was abundant in America, hundreds of acres could be given to this purpose. Among those who received such grants was Thomas Blount. In the spring of 1697 the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas granted Blount, for "transporting" 266 acres in what became the County of Beaufort in North Carolina.¹

Not long after Blount received his grant, Lionel Reading began to purchase land in the same general area. In 1701 he purchased a "plantation" from Edward Pearl on Pamlico (Pamlico) River in the County of Bath and the next year he bought 640 acres from Colonel Thomas Pollock. The latter purchase included the land with all "housing, fencing, woods and woodland." Shortly afterward (1706) he bought an acre and four poles on the front street of the town of Bath.²

Reading had five children: three sons—Nathaniel, Thomas, and Churchill—and two daughters—Sarah and Ann (Ann Elizabeth). When Lionel died (1708) he left a will bequeathing to his daughter Ann one Negro woman, Diana; some furniture and furnishings; and five pounds currency to be given to her when she reached her fifteenth year or married with the consent of her mother, Grace Reading.³

¹Deed Book of Beaufort County (vault of register of deeds, Washington, North Carolina), I (1701-1729), 1.

²Deed Book of Beaufort County, I, 13, 19, 62.

³North Carolina Wills, 1663-1789 (North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh), XXVI, 8, Lyonel Reading's will, July 12, 1708; J. Bryan Grimes, *Abstract of North Carolina Wills Compiled from Original Wills in the Office of the Secretary of State* (Raleigh: U. M. Uzell & Co., 1910), 170.